

years old to join the Marines, serving in the Vietnam war for 1 year and 11 months.

During his time in Vietnam, Sergeant Phillips survived two attacks but sustained life-changing injuries. He tearfully recalled losing most of his buddies when his unit came under gunfire while patrolling through a rice field. Sergeant Phillips woke up in the back of a medical vehicle with multiple injuries, including a severe blow to his left leg that required the removal of most of his calf. Decades later, he still has shrapnel in his hip, a painful reminder of the cost of freedom.

Sergeant Phillips says he doesn't regret his service because he hopes it will keep today's youth from facing the same hardship. He gives his time in the military credit for teaching him discipline and the sacred value of life.

Now, Sergeant Phillips takes pride in raising honeybees and growing fresh produce for the St. Clair County community. But he doesn't see himself as a hero—just a man who did what his country asked of him during a difficult point in history. His humility and devotion are an inspiration to us all.

The sacrifices made by our servicemembers are often overlooked or taken for granted by those of us who benefit from them. Even during the Korean war, often referred to as the "Forgotten War," there were men and women who willingly answered the call to serve—not for fame or recognition, but to keep our country safe from evil, like Sergeant Dave Jensen of Foley, who enlisted in the U.S. Air Force at 19 years old.

His job was to help assess aerial photography used for enemy surveillance. His first overseas assignment was in North Africa supporting those who flew along the Russian lines before doing stints in Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam. After honorably discharging, Sergeant Jensen made another commendable decision to enter public education, teaching the art of woodworking and mechanics during his 30 years as a shop instructor. Sergeant Jensen is an example of someone who knew the importance of his role to the overall mission and honorably carried out his part.

These veterans—Chris Amacker, Eric Prewitt, Jeff Wishik, Janet Pray, George Hamilton, Lonnie Phillips, and Dave Jensen—are all heroes. Our country is safer because of their efforts, and Alabama's communities are better off because of their service and continued service. Their sacrifices—whether loss of mobility, time spent away from family, postwar trauma, or the most vibrant years of their youth—demonstrate America's strength to the world. President Ronald Reagan summed it up best when he said, "Veterans know better than anyone else the price of freedom, for they've suffered the scars of war. We can offer them no better tribute than to protect what they have won for us."

I hope we will remember the price of freedom and those who have paid it. To

all of our veterans, thank you for your sacrifice and endeavors to ensure America remains the country of freedom and opportunity for generations to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING LORETTA LYNN

• Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, over the years, country music has evolved from its humble roots into a celebration of extremes. Most modern artists like to draw their listeners into one of two states: perfect happiness or pure agony. But country music's legacy lies somewhere in the middle, where life tests our mettle and deals both joy and sorrow, all too often in unequal measure. It is the realm of the courageously unlucky and the quietly brokenhearted and the source of the world's most complex and affecting storytelling. It is that world that Loretta Lynn invited us to experience from the time she was a young woman until the day she died.

Her resume is one of the most impressive in all entertainment: 46 solo studio albums, more than 50 Top Ten hits, member of the Grand Ole Opry, Country Music Hall of Famer, and the Country Music Association's first female Entertainer of the Year. But Loretta was much more than the sum of her accolades.

She grew up poor and uneducated in the coal-mining hills of Kentucky. She was a wife at 15, a mother at 16, and moved thousands of miles away from home at an age when most teenagers today would just start dreaming about escaping from their parents. When she wasn't busy raising her children, she sang and played songs on a \$17 Sears guitar.

If Nashville is a 10-year town, then I suppose Loretta Lynn must have considered herself lucky at last, she only had to wait 7 months from the time of her first record pressing to the moment she first stepped onstage at the Grand Ole Opry. Still, at 28, she had seen more than enough to know that there was no hiding in a spotlight, so she sang about her life and found a voice that was once assertive and disruptive. She blazed trails in music and television by being herself, using humor to blunt the edge that hard living and having little agency well into womanhood had given her writing.

On October 4 of this year, we lost our coal miner's daughter to a far better place. I will be forever grateful to her for her absolute belief in the power of storytelling. I hope her memory will inspire future generations of young women in music to do the bravest thing an artist can do and share their joy, pain, confusion, and hope in its most authentic form.●

TRIBUTE TO RUTH SKIDMORE

• Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and Mr. HAGERTY, I

ask unanimous consent that the following remarks be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to honor Ms. Ruth Skidmore of Oak Ridge, TN.

By the end of the Second World War, there were almost 30,000 Army nurses on Active Duty. These brave healers served on the home front and across oceans, caring for the wounded, and bringing hope to thousands of American and Allied servicemembers.

On November 2, 1943, a young lady named Ruth Skidmore joined their ranks and helped guide her compatriots on the frontlines through one of the darkest and most violent periods in American history. On October 13, 2022, Ruth celebrated her 100th birthday, and it felt appropriate that we should in turn celebrate not only her service to this country but her enduring legacy of service to her community.

Ruth Skidmore was born 100 years ago in Fort Wayne, IN, the sixth of seven children. She held an afterschool job at the one-room schoolhouse across the street from her home, cleaning chalkboards and erasers for 10 cents a day. Following her father's advice, Ruth deposited her earnings in a savings account—a responsible decision indeed. Unfortunately, she lost all \$13 of her savings in the crash of '29.

To this day, Ruth is still mad at Herbert Hoover.

She is a graduate of Hanover College, where she was crowned May Queen in her senior year. After college, Ruth contracted an eye infection and moved in with her uncle, who was an Army doctor. He suggested that she move to Arizona, believing that the dry air would aid in her healing. As it turns out, this piece of advice would change the course of Ruth's life. She moved to Tucson and signed up for Army Cadet School. The war was on, and everyone had a role to play. After the war Ruth moved to Oak Ridge, TN; after a short stint in Fort Lauderdale, FL, she returned to the Volunteer State to work as an industrial nurse at the Y-12 National Security Complex.

Over the years Ruth took on the duties of a wife and a mother, but she never stopped serving her community. While raising her family, Ruth worked part-time as a nurse and especially enjoyed her 2 years working in Appalachia.

Today, Ruth lives in Oak Ridge, where she indulges her green thumb and a love of music. She has always had a large garden and, as she puts it, was growing organic vegetables before it was cool. At the age of 60, Ruth threw herself into music lessons and developed no small talent on both the guitar and the piano. She regularly dazzles her friends and neighbors as part of a veterans' band.

Ruth, what a life you have lived. On behalf of all Tennesseans and our colleagues in the U.S. Senate, we wish you a very happy birthday and as much joy and love as one person could hope for in the coming year.●